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Letter dated 11 April 2014 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to forward to you a letter from the Special Representative of the Syrian Coalition to the United Nations, dated 11 April, in relation to the implementation of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) on the elimination of chemical weapons programme of the Syrian Arab Republic (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Levent **Eler**
Deputy Permanent Representative
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex to the letter dated 11 April 2014 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

On behalf of the people of Syria and the National Coalition of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces, it is my grave responsibility to draw to your attention the Syrian regime's repeated failure to effectively implement Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) and the ongoing need for conclusive verification by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Mission to ensure the full and complete destruction of all Syrian chemical weapons stockpiles and production facilities.

In adopting Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), the Security Council unanimously endorsed the decision of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Executive Council of 27 September 2013, which contains special procedures both for the destruction of Syria's chemical weapons stockpiles, as well as the stringent verification thereof. As the Security Council determined, "the use of chemical weapons anywhere constitutes a threat to international peace and security" (see Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), para. 1).

There is, however, significant reason to believe that the Syrian regime has continued to maintain and deploy illicit chemical weapons in the aftermath of the adoption of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). Just last month, on 27 March 2014, regime forces were reported to have deployed chemical weapons in Harasta, a suburb of Damascus. According to doctors and surgeons present following the attacks, at least 25 people were treated for symptoms ranging from hallucination, accelerated pulse, difficulty breathing and, in several cases, suffocation.

The Syrian regime's possible use of chemical weapons demonstrates the urgent need for the OPCW-United Nations Joint Mission to maintain vigilance in ensuring that all of Syria's chemical weapons stockpiles and production facilities are destroyed. Yet that will only be possible once all sites and stockpiles have been fully declared. It remains unclear whether that is the case.

To ensure the full and effective implementation of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), stringent verification and due diligence by the OPCW-United Nations Joint Mission are required throughout the oncoming months. As an initial step, the Joint Mission should send without delay a monitoring and inspection team to the Syrian Scientific Studies and Research Centre's facility in Jamraya, which has played an instrumental role in Syria's chemical weapons production, storage and deployment. Such a mission will allow OPCW-United Nations monitors to gain a more thorough accounting of Syria's chemical weapons stockpiles and any illicit weapons that may not have been declared by regime authorities.

Both the Syrian Coalition and the Free Syrian Army remain committed to the full, immediate and effective implementation of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). The Interim Defense Ministry has publicly confirmed the Free Syrian Army's commitment not to attack convoys on routes used to transfer chemical weapons for delivery to the United Nations. To ensure that we are fully able to assist in its implementation, however, the OPCW-United Nations Joint Mission must engage more transparently with our members. Improved methods of communication with the Joint Mission will ensure that the Free Syrian Army is better able to

guarantee the safety of chemical weapons convoys and assist effectively in the elimination of Syria's illegal chemical weapons stockpile.

A particular problem remains our lack of clarity regarding the nature of Syrian convoys. At present, it is impossible for Free Syrian Army brigades to distinguish between regime disposal convoys versus regime military convoys. It is therefore essential that the OPCW-United Nations Joint Mission provide the Syrian Coalition and its partner, the Free Syrian Army, with precise information on the schedule and routes of all convoys deployed through opposition-held territories. Such information will enable our partners on the ground to better support the safe passage of chemical weapons convoys.

The elimination of Syria's chemical weapons arsenal is an important and worthy goal. Yet, it will not end the Syrian crisis. While the Syrian regime distracts and delays in the implementation of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), it proceeds undaunted in its deployment of barrel bombs, cluster munitions and ballistic missiles. These weapons — conventional weapons — account for more than 99 per cent of all deaths in the past three years. Members of the Security Council have within their power the mandate not merely to condemn the brutal and illegal deployment of conventional weapons by regime forces, but to stop it. To do so, further pressure by the Security Council is urgently needed to draw this conflict to a close and compel the Syrian regime to negotiate and agree on the establishment of a transitional governing body to pave the path to democracy, as mandated by the Geneva Communiqué of June 2012, as well as by Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). The people of Syria remain committed to such a transition, as does the Syrian Coalition.

(*Signed*) Najib **Ghadbian**
Special Representative of the Syrian Coalition
to the United Nations